LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Original) An alkali-developable negative resist composition comprising a compound (A) which generates an acid upon exposure to radiation, and a resin component (B) which is made insoluble in alkali under the action of an acid, wherein the component (B) is a resin component containing:

(b1) a unit which becomes insoluble in an alkali solution as a result of the formation of a lactone under the action of an acid generated from the component (A), and

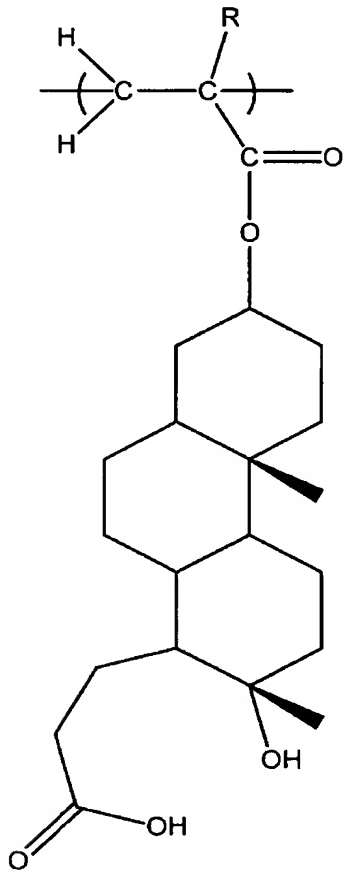
(b2) a unit having an alcoholic hydroxyl group.

2. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 1, wherein the lactone is δ-lactone.

3. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 2, wherein the unit (b1) is a unit derived from a (meth)acrylate ester having δ-hydroxy acid bonded to a non-aromatic polycyclic hydrocarbon group.

4. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 3, wherein the non-aromatic polycyclic hydrocarbon group is a group in which two hydrogen atoms are eliminated from a non-substituted or methyl-substituted tricycloalkane.

5. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 4, wherein the unit (b1) is a unit represented by the following general formula (I):

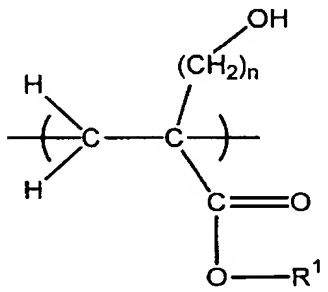


(I)

wherein R represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group.

6. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 1, wherein the unit (b2) is (i) a unit derived from an α-hydroxyalkyl acrylate ester.

7. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 6, wherein the unit (b2) is a unit represented by the following general formula (II):



(II)

wherein R^1 represents a lower alkyl group, a non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl group, a hydroxyl group-containing non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl group or a lactone-containing non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl group, and n represents an integer of 5 or less.

8. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 7, wherein R^1 is a lower alkyl group.

9. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 8, wherein R^1 is a methyl group.

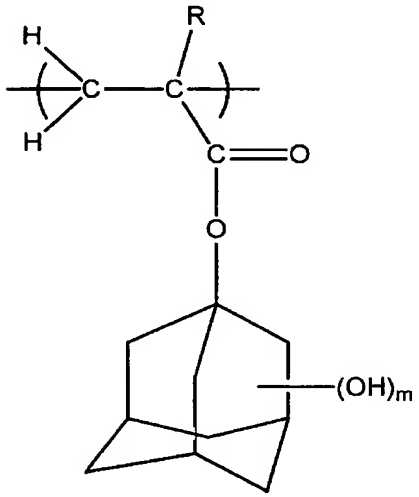
10. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 7, wherein n is 1.

11. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 1, wherein the unit (b2) is a unit derived from a hydroxyl group-containing non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl ester of (meth)acrylic acid.

12. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 11, wherein the hydroxyl group-containing non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl group, which constitutes the

hydroxyl group-containing non-aromatic polycyclic alkyl ester, is an adamanthyl group having at least one hydroxyl group.

13. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 12, wherein the unit (b2) is a unit represented by the following general formula (III):



(III)

wherein R represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group, and m represents an integer of 1 to 3.

14. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 13, wherein one hydroxyl group exists and the hydroxyl group is bonded to the adamanthyl group at the 3-position in the general formula (III).

15. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 14, wherein R is a hydrogen atom in the general formula (III).

16. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 14 for the development with an alkali developing solution having an alkali concentration of 1.0% by mass or more.

17. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 1, wherein the component (B) is a copolymer containing the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) in a molar ratio of 1:9 to 9:1.

18. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 11, wherein the component (B) is a copolymer containing the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) in a molar ratio of 1:9 to 9:1.

19. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 14, wherein the component (B) is a copolymer containing the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) in a molar ratio of 8:2 to 4:6.

20. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 19, wherein the component (B) is a copolymer containing the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) in a molar ratio of 7:3 to 5:5.

21. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 1, further comprising a solvent (C), the solvent (C) containing water.

22. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 11, further comprising a solvent (C), the solvent (C) containing water.

23. (Original) The negative resist composition according to claim 21, wherein the solvent (C) contains propylene glycol monomethyl ether and water.

24. (Withdrawn) A method of forming a resist pattern, which comprises using the negative resist composition of claim 1.

25. (New) The negative resist composition according to Claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the (b1) unit to the (b2) unit is within a range from 1:9 to 9:1.

26. (New) The negative resist composition according to Claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the (b1) unit to the (b2) unit is within a range from 4:6 to 3:7.

27. (New) The negative resist composition according to Claim 1, wherein the total amount of the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) is 50 mol% or more based on the component (B).

28. (New) The negative resist composition according to Claim 1, wherein the total amount of the unit (b1) and the unit (b2) is 70 mol% or more based on the component (B).